



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

June 8, 2001

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Craig McLaughlin, Senior Health Policy Manager

RE: REPORT ON RESEARCH TO INFORM PRIORITIES FOR 2001-2003

**Background and Summary**

At its January 12, 2001 meeting, the Board approved a process for gathering information and input that could inform its efforts to set new priorities for its 2001-03 efforts. In addition to calling for continued participation in the PHIP process, the Board directed staff to conduct a literature review (referred to as the "survey of surveys"), key partner interviews, and a "cyberforum."

Attached is a draft report on that work. The first section contains an overview of issues that emerged from that work. The second section summarizes the findings from Doreen Garcia's review of more than 40 documents (the survey of surveys). The third section described the findings from 52 interviews with key informants and 20 responses from an on-line survey (the cyberforum). The Board staff also took additional steps—such as consulting with author Laurie Garrett, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Betrayal of Trust*, and reviewing popular press coverage—that are described in the report.

The information is meant to be advisory only and does not provide clear, consistent direction to the Board.

People who were familiar with the Board, largely had very good things to say about its recent work. Ideas about the Board's future priorities were extremely varied. Some of the patterns that I observed and think the Board might want to keep in mind as it chooses new priorities are:

- There was broad (but not universal) support for the Board playing a role in access and medical care financing
- There was widespread support for the Board continuing to make health disparities a priority issue
- Several people interviewed had little or no knowledge of the Board's role
- Several people expressed interest in the Board looking at issues around obesity

- There were many concerns about whether preparing the State Health Report was a good use of Board resources
- Quite a few people were interested in the idea of the Board responding quickly to emerging issues, but not at the expense of long-term priority projects
- There was general support for issues on the Board's short list of possible projects
- There was significant agreement with the Board's criteria for evaluating priorities

### **Recommendations for Board Follow-up**

The Board staff recommends that Board members review this report carefully prior to the July 11 meeting. It would also be useful if the Board members would, as a planning exercise, complete the attached grid, which applies the Board's criteria to the short list of possible priority projects.